

## PRELIMINARY DRAFT

### SEWRPC Planning Report No. 15 (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) A Jurisdictional Highway System Plan for Walworth County

#### Chapter I

#### INTRODUCTION

On April 19, 1973, the Walworth County Board of Supervisors adopted an initial jurisdictional highway system plan. That plan, with a design year of 1990 and set forth in SEWRPC Planning Report No. 15, *A Jurisdictional Highway System Plan for Walworth County*, was based upon a comprehensive study of the jurisdictional responsibilities for the construction, maintenance, and operation of arterial streets and highways in Walworth County. Prepared under the guidance of an Advisory Committee consisting of Federal, State, county, and local officials, the plan was intended to help provide the County, over time, within an integrated highway transportation system that would effectively serve and promote a desirable land use pattern in the County, abate traffic congestion, reduce travel time and costs, and reduce crash exposure. The plan was intended to help concentrate appropriate resources and capabilities on corresponding areas of need, thus assuring the most effective use of public resources in the provision of highway transportation. The initial plan was prepared as a logical sequel to the 1990 seven-county regional transportation system plan. That plan focused on needed functional improvements to the regional arterial street and highway system, but, except for freeways, contained no recommendations as to which levels and agencies of government should assume jurisdictional responsibility for each of the facilities included in the functional plan.

Since its initial adoption in 1973, the Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan has been previously amended on four occasions. The first amendment of the original Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan occurred in 1978, upon the adoption by the Regional Planning Commission of the second-generation regional transportation plan.<sup>1</sup> This second-generation regional transportation plan was adopted by the Regional Planning Commission on June 1, 1978. The next amendment of the Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan occurred in 1991.<sup>2</sup> This amendment was formally adopted by the Walworth County Board of Supervisors on January 14, 1992. The Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan was amended again in 1994, upon adoption of

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<sup>1</sup> See *SEWRPC Planning Report No. 25, A Regional Land Use Plan and a Regional Transportation Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin—2000, Volume One, Inventory Findings, April 1975; and Volume Two, Alternative and Recommended Plans, May 1978.*

<sup>2</sup> See Amendment to the Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway System Plan—2010, *October 1991.*

the year 2010 third-generation regional transportation plan by the Commission.<sup>3</sup> The regional transportation plan, and attendant amended Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan as of 1994, were adopted by the Walworth County Board on August 6, 1995. Another amendment of the Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan occurred in 1997, upon the extension of the design year 2010 regional transportation plan to the design year 2020, and its adoption by the Commission.<sup>4</sup>

The latest review and re-evaluation of the regional land use and regional transportation plans by the Commission resulted in a fifth-generation design year 2035 regional land use plan, adopted by the Commission on June 21, 2006, and a fifth-generation design year 2035 regional transportation plan, also adopted by the Commission on June 21, 2006. In accordance with its advisory role, the Commission certified these plans to the constituent counties, cities, villages, and towns, as well as to certain state and Federal agencies, for endorsement and implementation.

The adopted regional transportation plan is set forth in SEWRPC Planning Report No. 49, *A Regional Transportation System Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2035*, June 2006. The regional transportation plan made recommendations regarding five key transportation elements: public transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transportation system management, travel demand management, and arterial street and highways. The public transit element envisions significant improvement and expansion of public transit in southeastern Wisconsin, including development within the Region of a rapid transit and express transit system, improvement of existing local bus service, and the integration of local bus service with the proposed rapid and express transit services. The bicycle and pedestrian facility element is intended to promote safe accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian travel, and encourage bicycle and pedestrian travel as an alternative to personal vehicle travel. The transportation systems management element includes measures intended to manage and operate existing transportation facilities to their maximum carrying capacity and travel efficiency, including: freeway traffic management, surface arterial street and highway traffic management, and major activity center parking management guidance. The travel demand management element includes measures intended to reduce personal and vehicular travel or to shift such travel to alternative times and routes, allowing for more efficient use of the existing capacity of the transportation system. The arterial street and highway element recommends the improvements needed to address the residual congestion which may not be expected to be alleviated by proposed land use,

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<sup>3</sup> See *SEWRPC Planning Report No. 41, A Regional Transportation System Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2010, December 1994.*

<sup>4</sup> See *SEWRPC Planning Report No. 46, A Regional Transportation Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2020, December 1997.*

transportation systems management, travel demand management, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and public transit.

The regional transportation plan thus contains an up-to-date functional arterial street and highway system plan. This functional plan consists of recommendations concerning the general location, type, capacity, and service levels of the arterial street and highway facilities required to serve southeastern Wisconsin and Walworth County to the year 2035. The regional transportation plan, however, did not reevaluate, but continues the recommendations from the current county jurisdictional highway system plans as to which levels and agencies of government should assume responsibility for the construction, operation, and maintenance of each of the various arterial facilities included in the plan. This Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan update will provide a review and reevaluation, and recommendations as to which level and agency of government should have jurisdictional responsibilities for each segment of arterial street and highway in Walworth County. This review is required at this time in order to address changing traffic demands and patterns, to adjust the jurisdictional systems to changes in land use development patterns, and to assure the maintenance of an integrated network of state and county trunk highways as urban development continues within the county.

As the second edition of SEWRPC Planning Report No. 15, this document is intended to be reviewed and approved by the Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway Planning Committee, by the Public Works Committee of the Walworth County Board of Supervisors, by the Board itself, and by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission as the official areawide planning agency for Southeastern Wisconsin.

## **STUDY ORGANIZATION**

This jurisdictional highway planning effort is an update to the current jurisdictional highway plan and was preceded by an intensive, comprehensive, areawide functional highway planning study as part of the design year 2035 regional transportation plan. The regional transportation plan provides almost all of the necessary basic planning and engineering data, as well as the basic traffic simulation models, essential to the jurisdictional highway system planning effort.

### **Advisory Committee Structure**

Because any realignment in the jurisdictional highway systems would affect the Federal, state, and local units of government concerned in many ways, it is essential to actively involve these units of government

in the jurisdictional highway planning process. Such participation has been previously obtained within the county in connection with the original Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan and its subsequent amendments through the Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway Planning Committee. That Committee has representation from the cities, villages, and towns in the County, the County, as well as from the Federal and state levels. A Walworth County Jurisdictional Highway Planning Committee will, therefore, provide guidance and assistance to the staff during the course of this study. Specifically, this Committee is charged with assisting and advising the study staff on technical methods, procedures, and interpretations; assisting in the assembly and evaluation of planning and engineering data; assisting in the establishment, definition, and review of criteria; appraising alternative plans; and resolving any conflicts which might arise in plan preparations and selection. The Committee is intended to be a working committee and to actively involve the federal, state, and local officials in the planning process. A complete committee membership list is set forth on the inside front cover of this report.

## **STUDY PURPOSE AND PLAN OBJECTIVES**

The primary purpose of jurisdictional highway system planning is to group into classes arterial streets and highways that serve similar functions and which, accordingly, should have similar design standards and levels of service. Once this classification process is completed, it is possible to assign jurisdictional responsibility logically for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of each of the groups to the state, county, and local levels of government. Thus, a county jurisdictional highway system plan indicates which highway facilities should be the primary responsibility of state government, county government, and local government—city, village, or town.

The Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan is intended to help Walworth County:

- Cope with the growing traffic demands within the County;
- Adjust the existing jurisdictional highway systems to changes in land use development along their alignment;
- Maintain an integrated county trunk highway system within the County;
- Adjust the existing jurisdictional highway system to better serve the major changes in traffic patterns taking place within the County; and
- Achieve an equitable distribution of arterial street and highway development and maintenance costs and revenues among the various levels and agencies of government concerned.

The county jurisdictional highway system plan will also provide a review, as requested, of the functional highway improvements—arterials to be widened with additional lanes and new arterials—recommended in the regional transportation plan within Walworth County.

## **SCHEME OF PRESENTATION**

The findings and recommendations of this updated Walworth County jurisdictional highway system planning process are documented in this report. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter II describes the existing arterial street and highway system and jurisdictional highway system in Walworth County; reviews the functional improvements of the arterial system and jurisdictional transfers of arterials between the various units of government—state, county and local—completed over the past 30 years since 1973, the year the original Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan was adopted; and presents the recommendations of the recently completed regional transportation plan with respect to functional highway capacity improvements and jurisdictional transfers. Chapter III describes the jurisdictional classification criteria utilized in this Walworth County jurisdictional highway system planning effort, which are intended to provide an objective and rational basis for the assignment of jurisdictional responsibility for the segments of the arterial street and highway system to the levels of government concerned—state, county and local. Chapter III also describes the current *State Statutes* governing the jurisdictional transfer of streets and highways. Chapter IV summarizes the application of the various jurisdictional classification criteria to the Walworth County arterial street and highway system that were considered in the formulation of the preliminary and recommended jurisdictional highway system plan, and presents the preliminary recommended new Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan. Chapter V presents the final recommended Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan. Chapter VI summarizes the new Walworth County jurisdictional highway system plan.

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